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SUBJECT: OCTOBER 15 MCNS MEETING: MORE ON MOI/MOD REFORM

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: On October 15, the Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS) was briefed on the results of the first meeting of a ministerial committee to reform the ministries of Defense and Interior, as well as the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS). The PM has given the committee a deadline of November 15 to develop plans to "balance" representation within the security ministries, train and rehabilitate security service personnel, and restructure the ministries, as necessary. As a first step in the process, the ministers overseeing the MoD, MoI, and INIS were tasked with drafting reports by October 18 outlining their views on how to reform their ministries. These reports will be submitted to the committee for its review and recommendations, possibly seeking the input of outside experts. In turn, committee will report to the MCNS, seeking appropriate decisions. Ambassador Khalilzad argued that competence and loyalty must ultimately trump the desire for "balance." The INIS argued in favor of an expanded mandate, including the ability to post foreign intelligence officers overseas. After November 15, the committee will turn its attention to issues relating to the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of the Militias. END SUMMARY.

Moving Forward with Security Sector Reform and Militia Policy

¶2. (S/NF) During the October 15 meeting of the Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS), National Security Advisor Rubaie announced that a ministerial committee for reform of the MoD, MoI, and Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) and for the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of the militias had held its first meeting. The committee decided that over the next month it would focus on plans to:

-- obtain "balanced" representation within the security ministries;

-- train and rehabilitate security sector personnel, including security/loyalty vetting; and

-- analyze the current structures of the ministries, with a view to restructuring as necessary.

Rubaie said the committee had decided to create sub-committees to focus on each of these goals. He also said that each minister (MOI, MOD, and INIS) would be responsible for drawing up a report describing the current state of his ministry, reforms he believes are necessary in the ministry,

and a proposed action plan of how to implement the reforms. Rubaie said that the Prime Minister had set a deadline of November 15 for agreeing to plans and beginning implementation of the reform of the security ministries. After that time, the committee would turn its attention to the issue of DDR.

¶3. (S/NF) Deputy PM al-Zubai stressed the importance in this process of respecting the views of the ministers, arguing that they "know what to do" to run their ministries. At the same time, he stressed that ministers needed to be held accountable for the performance of their ministries. Deputy PM Salih warned that ministerial decision making was constrained by the realities of the current political situation, adding that as a result it was important that ministers work closely with PM Maliki and the two deputy PMs.

Ambassador Warns Against Quotas

¶4. (S/NF) While acknowledging that it was a laudable goal to have security ministries in which all Iraqis could see themselves, the Ambassador cautioned that attempts to impose "balance" through numerical quotas could make the ministries dysfunctional. He said that competency and loyalty to the government should be the overriding concern. The Ambassador also asked why the Minister of State for National Security was not being examined in the same way as the MoD, MoI, and INIS, but no one picked up on this point.

Intelligence Reform

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¶5. (S/NF) The Deputy Director of the INIS argued that his service needed to have its mandate expanded, including through the stationing of intelligence officers at Iraq's diplomatic missions. FM Zebari agreed that Iraq needed to develop a foreign intelligence capability, closely coordinated with the Foreign Ministry. He said it would be particularly important to focus intelligence assets on neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan. He also cited Yemen as a country of concern.

The Way Ahead

¶6. (S/NF) Maliki told the relevant ministers that he expected them to prepare the reports on their ministries by Wednesday, October 18. He said the ministers should submit the reports to the ministerial committee on security forces reform where they will be reviewed and discussed, possibly with the help of outside experts. Maliki said that the report and any recommendations from the committee should be brought back to the MCNS as early as for appropriate decisions. He said that he expected an update from the committee on the ministerial reports at the October 22 MCNS meeting.

KHALILZHAD